

S18 ANTI-BULLYING POLICY (STUDENT)

Last Reviewed: March 2017
Next Review: March 2019
Responsible: The Principal
Approved by Access Committee

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 All students at the academy have the basic right to a schooling which is free from humiliation or abuse, whether physical, verbal or psychological. When a student's experience of school is as free from stress as possible, he/she is more likely to develop positive self-esteem, self-discipline and adhere to high standards of behaviour which contribute to effective learning and his/her academic and social development. Because bullying is a major cause of stress in the victim, it must be addressed effectively.
- 1.2 It is acknowledged that, in any school, some students experience bullying. Bullying can take place on the academy premises and at home via computers, tablets and phones, during school activities elsewhere, and while travelling to and from the academy.
- 1.3 It is important that the whole academy community – teaching and support staff, as well as students, parents and governors - are aware of potential forms of bullying and of their possible consequences. Furthermore, it is the joint responsibility of all in the academy community to watch for and expose bullying when it occurs and to work together both to stop it and seek to prevent it.
- 1.4 The academy will seek the support of parents/carers, as well as staff and students in developing this policy and the way the academy deals with issues of bullying.
- 1.5 All reported incidents must be tackled, however minor they are perceived to be, in order to reduce the occurrence of more serious bullying.

2. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

- 2.1 Bullying may be defined as **the wilful, conscious desire to hurt or distress another and put him/her under stress through physical, verbal or psychological abuse**. The behaviour is often repeated and there is usually an imbalance of power between the perpetrators of bullying and the target/s. This broad definition includes students being subjected to the following:

- being called names
- being teased or ridiculed
- being pushed or pulled about
- being hit, attacked or intimidated

- having possessions taken and thrown about
- having rumours spread about them
- being ignored and left out
- being taken advantage of (e.g. my sweets for your watch; being forced to hand over money or possessions)
- being attacked because of religion, race or colour, disability or gender
- being attacked because of sexuality. This includes any form of homophobic, biphobic or transphobic (HTB) bullying
- being sent threatening notes
- inappropriate peer pressure by individuals or groups
- cyber bullying – including:
 - sending inappropriate, offensive or degrading text messages, emails, images or instant messages on the internet using mobile or other devices
 - setting up websites designed to embarrass or upset individuals
 - malicious and/or inappropriate communication via social networking sites.

2.2 The seriousness of the above situations will vary but it is how they are perceived by the victim that is crucial. These issues will be addressed, no matter how trivial they may appear to others. This will involve time spent in counselling both the victim and the bully, and possibly others.

3. DEALING WITH BULLYING

3.1 The academy's response to the problem of bullying will be both proactive and reactive:

3.2 Proactive

- (a) By the promotion of the Proud to Belong ethos and British Values within the academy, and the development of personal qualities including empathy, consideration, selflessness, mutual respect, support and care, and responsibility for one's own behaviour.
- (b) By a comprehensive programme of education for students – and training for staff on how to tackle HTB bullying – on issues that affect lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBTB) students, and by the promotion of the Proud to Belong ethos which recognises and celebrates diversity and difference.
- (c) By a comprehensive induction programme for each year group at the start of the academic year, with particular focus on expectations of conduct as outlined in the Student Behaviour Policy and Code of Conduct.
- (d) By the careful induction of students who join the academy during the academic year, which will include a meeting with their Head of House and Form Tutor, with particular focus on the expectations outlined above. These new students will be allocated a 'buddy' from their tutor group and/or year group, who will help them settle into the academy routine.
- (e) By encouraging a broad, interesting and challenging curriculum, and a publicised full and varied programme of extra-curricular activities in order to provide a focus for the positive use of both classroom and non-classroom time.

- (f) By raising general awareness of the problem of bullying, its impact on individuals and how it is tackled – this awareness will be raised through a variety of forums including, among others, the PSHCE programme, opportunities within the curriculum, assemblies and form time.
- (g) By ensuring high standards of behaviour within all classrooms.
- (h) By ensuring appropriate levels of supervision throughout the academy buildings and grounds at all times of the school day by all members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching.
- (i) By encouraging a willingness and trust among students - both victims and onlookers - to expose bullying whenever it occurs - it is "**OK to tell**". Students may report any incidence to a member of staff, either by speaking to them in person or reporting the issue to Student Services. Students are also able to use the academy's **oktotell** email address which is monitored by key pastoral staff.
- (j) By encouraging parents/carers to report bullying.

3.3 Reactive

- (a) By applying an agreed procedure for dealing constructively with bullies and their victims (see **Procedures for Dealing with Bullying**). Staff, students, parents/carers and governors will regularly be made aware of this procedure. The procedure will be applied with consistency, and sensitivity as soon as possible after the incident has been reported. An effective response to "minor" cases will help to preclude major incidents.
- (b) By ensuring that the victim receives protection, and is offered support to help him/her to respond appropriately to the bully. This might include an offer of follow-up support by a member of staff or a peer mentor, and help in how to avoid future situations that may make them vulnerable to bullying.
- (c) By offering guidance to both bullies and onlookers. The behaviour should be criticised rather than the person, and positive encouragement given to more sensitive and considerate conduct.
- (d) By increasing vigilance in areas in the academy where there is a danger of bullying at times identified as the result of information received from students, and by the provision of safe havens for particularly vulnerable students who may feel in need of such a facility.
- (e) Where instances of bullying involving our students occur outside academy hours and are drawn to our attention, parents/carers will be informed. This includes incidents of cyber bullying.
- (f) Where allegations of bullying are substantiated, the academy will issue appropriate sanctions, in line with the academy's Student Behaviour Policy and/or Code of Conduct. All students who receive sanctions for bullying, racism, or homophobic incidents will have follow-up education as part of their sanction. This will be organised by the pastoral team and will include a focus on British Values.

4 PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

- 4.1 This section outlines procedures to deal with incidents of bullying at the academy. It is important that all staff take a consistent approach to the problem in accordance with the following guidelines:

- (a) It is the responsibility of all staff - teaching and support - to be vigilant for incidents of bullying and to intervene when they occur. Deterioration of work, dubious illness, staying close to staff, lagging behind at lesson changes, frequent loss of possessions or money can be signs of distress and should alert staff to the possibility of bullying.
- (b) Victims and other students or parents/carers who report incidents must be taken seriously. They must feel they can trust staff to deal with the matter promptly and sensitively.
- (c) Incidents of bullying are to be recorded on the Behavioural Log within the academy's SIMS system. These records should be made on SIMS by the teacher or member of staff, depending on where the incident occurred (whether inside a classroom or outside of lessons). It is important that staff use the correct code within SIMS, to distinguish the precise nature of the alleged bullying. These logs will be monitored by Heads of House, as well as other key pastoral staff and form tutors where appropriate.
- (d) Victims, witnesses and students accused should be interviewed individually away from the scene of the incident. The member of staff dealing with the situation should ensure that the following information is included in statements:
- **WHEN** the incident took place (including if over a period of time);
 - **WHERE** the incident took place;
 - **WHO** was involved - as victim, bully and onlooker. It is important to record the names of onlookers. Some may prove to be useful independent witnesses, others may need to be reprimanded for encouraging/assenting to the bullying;
 - **WHAT** was the nature of the incident; particular care should be exercised to ensure that any form of bullying which is racist or HTB based is carefully and promptly recorded, and acted swiftly on.
 - **WHY** the bullying occurred.
- (e) The bully should be confronted with the accusations in a calm atmosphere and be given the opportunity to explain his/her actions. If guilty he/she must be left in no doubt about the unacceptability of his/her behaviour, and parents will be informed where appropriate. All sanctions for bullying or incidents of a racist or HTB based nature will require the offending student to undertake an agreed educational session.
- (f) The member of staff investigating the allegation should ensure that the relevant Head of House is fully aware and the latter is responsible, where appropriate, for recommending appropriate sanctions to the Vice Principal: Pastoral Care and Safeguarding or, in his absence, another member of SLT. The official academy evidence form should be completed on these occasions. The Head of House will ensure that parents/carers of all students involved are informed of the outcome of any investigation and that the relevant communication logs on SIMS are completed.
- (g) Where appropriate – either as part of the sanction, or as a follow up – a meeting should be set up between all parties involved, in order that

issues can be discussed and a restorative way forward established in cases of on-going problems between students.

- (h) If the bullying behaviour persists, the academy will take further action, which could result in an escalation of sanctions, with more serious outcomes for the individual(s) concerned.

Cross References

1. S9 Child Protection and Training Policy
2. S4 Student Behaviour Policy
3. The Bushey Academy S15 Home Academy Agreement
4. The Bushey Academy S38 Student ICT Acceptable Usage Policy
5. HM Govt (2015) Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales